

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 19975 221629Z
ACTION EUR-12

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TEL AVIV FOR AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR CSCE UR US
SUBJECT: MUKACHEVO CEMETERY

REF: STATE 308867 AND PREVIOUS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. AS INSTRUCTED, ACTING POL COUNS AND
EMBOFF CALLED DECEMBER 22 ON MFA CONSULAR ADMINISTRATION
DEPUTY CHIEF REZNICHENKO TO MAKE POINTS CONCERNING MUKACHEVO,
AND LATER ENCOURAGED USA DIVISION DEPUTY FEDOSEYEV TO
FOLLOW UP. REZNICHENKO, WHILE OBVIOUSLY READING INTO NEW
BRIEF, WAS NONETHELESS NEITHER HOSTILE NOR DEFENSIVE,
PROMISED TO CONCERN HIMSELF WITH MATTER AND REPLY, AND
INDICATED AWARENESS OF TIME URGENCY INVOLVED. WE SUGGEST
DEPARTMENT CONSIDER ANOTHER DEMARCHE NEXT WEEK; POSSIBILITY
OF LIMITED SMALL GROUP COMPOSED OF MUKACHEVO ASSOCIATION
MEMBERS ONLY, IN CASE CHANCE OF RECEIVING ENTRY PER-
MISSION WOULD BE IMPROVED BY LIMITATION; AND POSSIBILITY
OF MAKING AS MANY FACTS ON GRAVE LOCATIONS AS CAN BE
ASSEMBLED AT SHORT NOTICE AVAILABLE TO SOVIETS. ADVISE.
END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 19975 221629Z

2. DURING DECEMBER 22 CALL ON MFA'S DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF
CONSULAR ADMINISTRATION N.G. REZNICHENKO, ACTING
POLITICAL COUNSELOR RAISED AGAIN SUBJECT OF MUKACHEVO
CEMETERY, DRAWING ON POINTS CONTAINED IN REFTTEL.

3. REZNICHENKO NOTED THAT HE WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH EMBASSY'S DEMARCHE OF DECEMBER 8 AND READ COPY OF IT CAREFULLY. (NOTE HAD BEEN DELIVERED TO USA DIVISION DEPUTY CHIEF FEDOSEYEV WHO SUBSEQUENTLY REFERRED MATTER TO CONSULAR DIVISION AND ADVISED ACTING POL COUNS TO CALL ON REZNICHENKO). NEVERTHELESS, REZNICHENKO STATED, HE KNEW ENOUGH TO SAY THAT WHILE MATTER WAS BASICALLY WITHIN JURISDICTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES, AND WHILE IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT CEMETERY WAS INDEED SCHEDULED TO BE CLOSED, LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAD SET ASIDE SECTION IN ANOTHER LOCAL CEMETERY WHERE REMAINS MAY BE TRANSFERRED TOGETHER WITH HEADSTONES AT REQUEST OF RELATIVES. IN FACT, ABOUT 90 SUCH REQUESTS HAD ALREADY BEEN HONORED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN MUKACHEVO.

4. ACTING POL COUNS REITERATED FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- RELATIVES IN U.S. ARE IN MOST CASES NOT CLOSE RELATIVES (AS REQUIRED BY SOVIET LAW IN REQUESTS FOR EXHUMATION AND TRANSFER OF REMAINS) BUT DISTANT RELATIVES, AND HE HOPED THIS WOULD NOT CAUSE DIFFICULTIES;

--MUKACHEVO ASSOCIATION HAS LEARNED FROM MUKACHEVO PRESS SOURCE THAT DECEMBER 31 DEADLINE WILL NOT BE EXTENDED AND ARE CONCERNED WITH WHAT MAY FOLLOW;

-- MUKACHEVO ASSOCIATION INTERESTED IN PRESERVATION OF CEMETERY AND WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY TO UPKEEP;

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 19975 221629Z

-- IN ANY CASE, ASSOCIATION AND APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FUND WISH TO SEND SMALL GROUP TO USSR TO DISCUSS MATTER WITH APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS IN JANUARY OR FEBRUARY, IF SOVIET SIDE AGREES;

-- IT IS TO BE HOPED THAT "CLOSING" REFERS TO PROHIBITION ON NEW BURIALS RATHER THAN LIQUIDATION OF CEMETERY AND WE WOULD APPRECIATE CLARIFICATION OF THIS POINT, AS WELL AS INFORMATION ON TIME FRAMES ENVISAGED;

-- DEPARTMENT OF STATE STRONGLY SUPPORTS REQUESTS ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS AND WOULD APPRECIATE PROMPT RESPONSE TO DECEMBER 8 NOTE.

HE ADDED PERSONAL VIEW THAT WHILE SOVIET ACTIONS MAY BE UNDERSTANDABLE IN THEMSELVES, IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IF PROBLEM WERE TO ASSUME EXAGGERATED SIGNIFICANCE AT THIS TIME, SAY IN JANUARY 1977.

5. REZNICHENKO PROMISED TO LOOK INTO MATTER, DRAW IT TO ATTENTION OF APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES, AND RESPOND TO QUESTIONS. HE RECOGNIZED TIME URGENCY INVOLVED. HE ADDED IN CONCLUSION THAT PROPOSAL FOR A GROUP TO TRAVEL TO MUKACHEVO MAY INVOLVE PROBLEM IN THAT CEMETERY IS LOCATED IN CLOSED AREA. ACTING POL COUNS RESPONDED THAT MAIN POINT IS TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR GROUP TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS WITH COMPETENT AUTHORITIES IN MOSCOW, KIEV OR ELSEWHERE; QUESTION OF EXCEPTION FOR CLOSED AREA TRAVEL WOULD ARISE AT END RATHER THAN BEGINNING OF DISCUSSIONS. EXCHANGE ENDED WITH REZNICHENKO NOTING THAT HE AWARE THAT AREA OF MUKACHEVO AND ZHITOMIR WERE ONCE CENTERS OF HASSIDIC COMMUNITIES. IN FACT, HE REMEMBERS HASSIDIC GROUP FROM U.S. HAD VISITED ZHITOMIR IN 1961 OR 1962 WHERE IT WAS RECEIVED BY THE CITY SOVIET.

6. IN SUBSEQUENT CALL (SAME DATE) REGARDING OTHER TOPICS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 MOSCOW 19975 221629Z

ON MFA USA DIVISION DEPUTY FEDOSEYEV, ACTING POL COUNS SAID THAT HE HAD JUST SEEN REZNICHENKO ON MUKACHEVO, AND THAT LATTER HAD PROMISED TO CONCERN HIMSELF WITH IT DESPITE RELATIVE UNFAMILIARITY; FEDOSEYEV WAS ASKED TO SEND REZNICHENKO COPY OF NOTE ASAP. FEDOSEYEV REPLIED WITH ASSURANCE THAT MATTER WAS WITHIN JURISDICTION OF CONSULAR ADMINISTRATION, THAT (ADMINISTRATION CHIEF) IPPOLITOV WAS FAMILIAR WITH IT AND HAD NOTE, AND THAT HE WOULD TALK TO THEM ABOUT IT.

7. COMMENT. REZHICHENKO WAS NEITHER HOSTILE NOR ESPECIALLY DEFENSIVE IN COURSE OF TALK, THOUGH HE WAS OBVIOUSLY READING INTO A NEW BRIEF. IT MAY BE WORTHWHILE TO CONSIDER ANOTHER DEMARCHE NEXT WEEK, AND, IN CASE IT DEVELOPS THAT SMALL GROUP COMPOSED EXCLUSIVELY OF MUKACHEVO ASSOCIATION MEMBERS WOULD HAVE BETTER CHANCE OF RECEIVING ENTRY PERMISSION THAN EXTENDED GROUP, TO SUGGEST SUCH LIMITATION TO DORN AND SCHNEIER. IT WOULD PROBABLY ALSO BE USEFUL TO MAKE AVAILABLE AS MANY FACTS CONCERNING SPECIFIC LOCATIONS OF GRAVES AS CAN BE ASSEMBLED ON SHORT NOTICE. ADVISE.
MATLOCK

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